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Food for Thought: Consumer Perspectives of the Environmental Impacts of Food Choices

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

LYNDA KRIFLIK

Masters in Education, Graduate Diploma in Environmental
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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Kriflik, L., (2004) *Critical Social Science As A Way Of Exploring Health and Environment*, in Wright, J., (ed.) *Researching in Sport, Physical and Health Education*, Conference Papers, University of Wollongong, pp105-121

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Abstract

There is a paucity of information on how consumers perceive environmental risk as impacting on food supply and the relationship of food choices to this risk. Twenty six participants were recruited in the Illawarra region of New South Wales to be involved in this study, which was conducted over a period of eighteen months. A methodology drawing on critical social science theory was used to explore the participants' understanding of the food system and to document the influence of critical reflection over time on participants' food choices. This approach differs from surveys of consumer opinions in that, after setting the initial agenda, it allows for the participants' concerns to become the focus. For health professionals this provides a rich source of information on people's concerns about the food system and also the priority of these for the individual. Such information is invaluable for the development of collaborative projects that aim to address environmental health risks within the food system from the consumer perspective.

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Contents

1	Food for Thought - An Overview	10
1.1	Introduction.....	10
1.1.1	Purpose.....	12
1.1.2	Objectives.....	13
1.1.3	Value.....	13
1.2	Rationale for the Research.....	14
1.2.1	Researcher's Position	15
1.3	Definitions and Thesis Structure.....	16
1.3.1	Definitions.....	16
1.3.2	Thesis Structure.....	17
2	The Food System and Environmental Health; Literature Review and Background.....	21
2.1	Introduction.....	21
2.2	The Imperative for a Social Ecology Framework.....	24
2.3	The Food System, Social Change and Public Health.....	30
2.4	Consumers, Trust and the Food System; Existing Research.....	42
2.5	Controversial Technology and the Food System.....	47
2.6	Public Health; The Need for a Holistic Approach to Food System Risks	49
2.6.1	Challenges to Adopting this Holistic Approach.....	50
2.7	Summary.....	51
3	Theoretical Framework	53
3.1	Risk and the Individual in Modern Societies.....	53
3.2	Transferring the Responsibility for Risk to the Individual.....	56
3.2.1	Views of Risk.....	59
3.2.2	Trust and Risk	62
3.3	Consumption and Reflexivity; the Risks of Choice.....	67

3.3.1	A Continuum of Consumer/Citizen Behaviours.....	71
3.3.2	Consumer Sovereignty	75
3.4	Summary	78
4	Methodology	80
4.1	Introduction.....	80
4.1.1	Approaches to Qualitative Data	80
4.1.1.1	The Role of the Researcher	83
4.2	The Research Process	84
4.2.1	Location	84
4.2.2	The Recruitment Process	84
4.2.3	The Interview Process and Questions	86
4.2.3.1	Interview Methods	86
4.2.3.2	Stage 1: Individual Interview	87
4.2.3.3	Stage 2: Round One of the Focus Groups.....	90
4.2.3.4	Stage 3: Round Two of the focus groups.....	91
4.3	Data Management and Analysis	93
4.4	Conclusion	95
5	Findings - 'Give Me Something to Expand My Mind About'	97
5.1	Preamble	97
5.2	Introduction.....	99
5.3	The Individual Interviews.....	101
5.3.1	Agricultural Intensity, Food Quality and the Environment	102
5.3.2	Food Safety and the Environment	105
5.3.3	Waste	109
5.3.4	Summary of Individual Interviews	113

5.4	Round One of the Focus Groups.....	114
5.4.1.1	Summary and Questions	122
5.5	Round Two of the Focus Groups	123
5.5.1.1	Summary	127
5.6	Reflections on the Process.....	128
5.6.1	The Participant Perspective.....	128
5.6.2	Participant Views on The Process	130
5.7	Conclusion.....	131
6	Risk, Trust and Control in the Food System	134
6.1	The Food System, Governance, Risk and Trust	136
6.1.1	Governance and Standards.....	143
6.2	Economics or Health	148
6.2.1	Economics and Equity in the Food System	152
6.3	Imposed Risks and Information.....	157
6.4	Research, Science and Food Risk	162
6.5	Power, Influence and the Media	168
6.6	Conclusion.....	172
7	Acting to Reduce Risk	175
7.1	Introduction.....	175
7.2	Food Citizenship	177
7.2.1	The Politics of Food System Risk	177
7.2.2	Consumer Sovereignty and Citizenship Behaviour.....	181
7.3	Motivations for environmentally responsible behaviour	184
7.3.1	Change, Confidence and Other Priorities	187
7.4	Mapping Responses to the Food System.....	190

7.4.1.1	Tom	195
7.4.1.2	Livia	197
7.4.1.3	Lila	198
7.4.1.4	Sharon	199
7.4.1.5	Ambrose	201
7.5	Conclusion	203
8	Summary and Final Considerations	205
8.1	Introduction.....	205
8.2	Participants' Perspectives on The Food System and Associated Risks.....	208
8.3	Participant Response to the Individualisation of Risk.....	211
8.4	Significance to the Health Sector.....	214
8.5	Limitations and Areas for Further Exploration.....	217
8.6	The Way Forward	219
9	Appendices	223
9.1	Appendix A - Recruitment Advertisement.....	223
9.2	Appendix B - Participant Information Sheet	224
9.3	Appendix C - Participant Consent Form	225
9.4	Appendix D - Participant Contact Details and Background.....	226
9.5	Appendix E - Semi Structured Individual Interview Questions	227
9.6	Appendix F - Summary of Round 1 Interviews.....	229
9.7	Appendix G – Participant Details	231
9.8	Appendix H - Invitation Letter for Focus Group 1	232
9.9	Appendix I – Focus Group Responses	233
9.10	Appendix J- Summary of Round 1 Focus Groups	235
10	References.....	237

List of Tables and Figures

Table 2.1 Food Production Impacts	38
Figure 2.1 Waste Composition	40
Figure 3.1 Citizenship Continuum	72
Table 4.1 Coding Structure	94
Figure 7.1 Food System Influences and Responses Model	194

List of Abbreviations

BSE... Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

FSANZ... Food Safety Australia and New Zealand

WHO... World Health Organisation